The German Ambassador meets smallholder farmers in Tigray

The new German Ambassador is hosted to observe the German Development Corporation’s impact in the agricultural sector of Ethiopia

On 06 and 07 September, the new German Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union, H.E. Brita Wagener, embarked on her first field mission which aimed to familiarise the Ambassador with the interventions that are supported by the German Government in the agriculture and education sectors.

Ambassador Wagener visited the Tigray region to get a glimpse of the work and impact that the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) programme has had on the lives of smallholder farmers and the improvement of the management of natural resources. The Country Directors of the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) accompanied her as she visited the rehabilitated watershed, May Atsemi, in Tahtay Maichew district. She met with government focal persons, development agents and members of the community, including a youth beekeeping group and a model farmer who is benefitting from the Integrated Soil Fertility Management Project (ISFM+); an integrated special component in GIZ-SLM that is funded by the German Government’s ‘One World - No Hunger’ initiative (SEWOH). Ambassador Wagener was impressed with the observations of the work that the German Development Cooperation and its partners have been able to achieve on the ground.

But what lies ahead for the Ambassador following her mission? In November, she will spearhead the bi-lateral negotiations between the Governments of Ethiopia and Germany about the future direction of the GIZ-SLM programme. This will seal the new Ethio-German partnership in the agriculture sector.
Improving agricultural education systems

A working group to strengthen coordination in development of curricula and training resources

The Support to the ATVET in Natural Resource Management (NRM) and related Livelihoods component of GIZ organised an official launch for the curriculum review working groups. The ceremony was held on 04 September at the Beshale Hotel in Addis Ababa and attended by over 30 participants from the NRM Department and different ATVET Colleges.

The working group was established in June and comprises of the heads, instructors and advisors of ATVET Colleges. The group aims to support the customisation and improvement of the ATVET curriculum delivered in five selected colleges. Following the ceremony, the group set out to develop an assessment package for extension training materials over a three day workshop.

What is Farmer Business School?

A promise of better economic wellbeing for Ethiopian smallholder farmers

The national Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP) follows a three-staged watershed management approach which includes community mobilisation, land rehabilitation and economic development of the rehabilitated watersheds. The concept of Farmer Business School (FBS) offer great opportunities for the economic development of farmers and rehabilitated watersheds.

The FBS, in general, targets at changing the mind-sets of farmers by sensitising them for market opportunities and possibilities to improve productivity, family income and nutrition. FBS is an important tool to capacitate smallholder farmers to start commercialisation of their produce and to provide them with financial tools to make strategic and operational business decisions. Furthermore, FBS is aimed at widening the perspectives of farmers onto other segments of the value chain. The training on FBS will be helpful in making farmers strategically rethink their production choices and to include them as much as possible into ongoing value chain thinking and development. Applied to the Ethiopian context, FBS can also improve farmers’ efficiency and utilisation of limited resources through business planning.

Contributed by: Hanna Lemma, Intern, GIZ-SLM

Impacts of the National Sustainable Land Management Programme

4,500 hectares
Better irrigated farmland

1,313
Small-scale farming groups empowered

1.34 million
Farmers & their families benefitted

450,000 hectares
Land rehabilitated

- National extension workers and districts and community experts are in a better position to scale up approaches to new areas and transfer know how to communities.
- Since 2008, areas benefitting from small scale irrigation result in higher yields and incomes.
- Government partners received support at all administrative levels to plan and implement projects effectively. 1,773 watershed plans were developed with community participation.
- Farming community groups have knowledge, skills and ownership to manage communal land sustainably.

Source: Impact Assessment of the SLMP Target Regions (December 2016)
Healthier diets for mothers and their children in Tigray region

A nutrition ambassador sets out to reach and change nutrition behaviours of rural communities

The Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Project (NSAP) is part of the German Government’s ‘One World-No Hunger’ initiative (SEWOH) and its approach is aligned with the GIZ-SLM programme. The project aims to improve intake and access to food for the most vulnerable households in three rural districts of the Tigray region. More than 88,000 farmers are targeted with special focus of at least 12,000 women of reproductive age and 3,000 children below 2 years of age.

An integral part of food and nutrition security is a society’s knowledge, attitudes, norms and cultural practices. Therefore, the project devised a social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) strategy which should help foster positive nutrition behaviours amongst communities that lack important knowledge and especially the awareness of changing behaviour towards a more healthy and clean environment. The need for an influential and celebrated individual to act as an ambassador for the issue arose.

Mahlet Gebregiorgis is a famous singer from Tigray region. As a woman and young mother herself, she enthusiastically took on the role. Together with the new nutrition ambassador, the NSAP developed campaign materials that teach about good nutrition behaviours with a special focus on the needs of child-bearing women and their infants. These include for example a song entitled ‘Aynit’ and various information education materials such as billboards, leaflets and recipe books. The campaign will be launched officially in the coming months. Mahlet will tour the targeted districts and appear in different regional media outlets to promote how a diversified diet and a clean environment can improve the health and wellbeing of families.

Building on the ongoing SLMP and harmonised with its framework, the project has two overall goals. The development goal is to improve livelihoods, food security and economic wellbeing of the country’s farmers, herders and forest resource users. The environmental goal is to rebuild Ethiopia’s natural capital by overcoming the causes and mitigating the negative impacts of land degradation on the structure and functional integrity of the country’s ecosystem.

Together, GIZ and KfW are responsible for the overall implementation of the project.
 Farmers take the lead in the rural capacity development approaches

Farmer Field Schools are a new concept in Ethiopia. Unlike previously practiced approaches of watershed development, this approach puts trained farmers and their groups at the forefront of the learning process.

In July 2017, the Integrated Soil Fertility Management Project (ISFM+) conducted training workshops in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray with the goal of creating awareness about the concept of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and the role of farmers therein. Over 190 farmers, development agents and focal persons from government attended. So, what is a FFS and how does it work?

In the ISFM+ experience, a FFS is made up of 15 - 20 individual members from community-based institutions. The FFS selects one model farmer who provides a demonstration plot, commits to its management for ISFM versus conventional farming practices and openly shares knowledge of the learnings. The dates for the training and observation events are set jointly by the model farmer and the FFS members. This schedule serves as the curriculum and attendance is mandatory for all members. The training events form the key operations of ISFM, both before season start and during growing season. Whilst the development agent guides and supports the model farmer and the members of the FSS in the first year, in subsequent years, the model farmer takes the lead in the FSS activities. For a well-operated FFS, the model farmer also keeps clear records of demonstration plots, model farmer and the FFS member use ISFM technologies on their own farm plots, demonstrations prove profitable and farmers outside the FFS adopt ISFM technologies.

Using this FFS, ISFM+ has the goal to spread ISFM approaches to 57,000 hectares of land in the regions of Amhara, Oromia and Tigray.

 Going beyond borders to share good practices from Ethiopia

 Malawi learns from the Ethiopian experience of using the integrated watershed management approach

In late 2016, two country offices of GIZ in Africa came together – one to share and the other to learn. The collaboration aimed to help stimulate the development of GIZ’s Social Protection Programme (SPP) in Malawi by adopting the integrated watershed management approach to improve implementation of public works projects and to rehabilitate natural assets to help buffer climate shocks and boost resilience of communities.

The GIZ-SLM programme in Ethiopia sent one of its many seasoned Watershed Management Advisors to Malawi in order to sensitise GIZ-SPP and its stakeholders on the integrated watershed development approach. District officers and extension workers underwent trainings on topics like nursery management and biophysical soil and water conservation and received practical implementation manuals. And the establishment of a national watershed forum started the process of the development of the country-wide watershed management roadmap.

Owen Chisinga, Assistant District Forestry Officer in Mchinji district in Malawi stated: “Previously, we used to implement public works projects using the single-sector approach. After the training, we are now able to plan and implement projects together with other sectors. We learnt that communities need to understand and employ the approach. As a district, we expect that the integrated watershed management approach is applied at national level for successful implementation of the Public Works Programme.”